



FOR RELEASE: April 1, 2021, 6 a.m. ET

Research-Based How-to Guides Help Families Prevent Online and In-Person Child Sexual Abuse

Hot Chocolate Talk® Campaign Normalizes Safety Conversations During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

SEATTLE—As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, ongoing disruptions to children’s routines have escalated parents’ worries about in-person and online child sexual abuse. In support of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, Committee for Children is launching its fourth annual [Hot Chocolate Talk](#) campaign to help families start conversations with their children about personal and digital safety.

“With children spending an increased amount of unsupervised time online, parents remain a key driver in identifying and preventing child sexual abuse during the pandemic,” says Dr. Tia Kim, campaign spokesperson and vice president of education, research, and impact at Committee for Children. “When parents communicate safety rules with children early and often, they create environments where kids feel comfortable asking questions and having difficult conversations, such as disclosing abuse.”

In 2020, official reports of child abuse plummeted by more than 40 percent compared to the previous year. However, resources like the National Sexual Assault Hotline experienced record demand, especially from children. In the United States, one in four girls and one in 20 boys report experiencing sexual abuse before the age of 18. With teachers in remote settings no longer able to lead child sexual abuse reporting, the need for families to take action is clear.

Drawing upon more than four decades of work in the field of child protection, Committee for Children has created free How-to Guides with research-based language and age-appropriate tips to help families normalize safety conversations throughout childhood. The Hot Chocolate Talk How-to Guides equip parents and caregivers with research-based strategies to build trust with children in everyday moments, teach simple, age-appropriate body safety rules, and create warmth and comfort when talking about serious topics.



“We know child sexual abuse can be a challenging subject to navigate. The Hot Chocolate Talk How-to Guides help parents and caregivers take the guesswork out of knowing what to say and when to say it,” says Dr. Kim. “A shared treat can help create a more comfortable atmosphere. We encourage families to sit down over a cup of hot chocolate and start the conversation today.”

Families can download the free How-to Guide at HotChocolateTalk.org, along with a variety of approachable, research-based resources that include guidance on how to respond to disclosure and how to identify signs of abuse.

###

About Committee for Children

Committee for Children is a global nonprofit on a mission to ensure children everywhere can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. Our founders designed our first program, Talking About Touching, to empower children to recognize, refuse, and report sexual victimization. We’ve broadened our scope throughout the past four decades to include bullying prevention programs, and today we’re best known for our innovative Second Step® social-emotional learning programs. Second Step programs blend research and rigor with intuitive design and reach more than 16.5 million children worldwide. Learn more about the work we do at cfchildren.org.

Media Contacts

M’Bilia Meekers, mmeekers@cfchildren.org, 206-438-6541